

ABSTRACT

Lead Agency: U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Type of Action: Administrative

Jurisdiction: Madera, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, Kings, Tulare, eastern Fresno, and western Kern counties, California

Abstract: The Draft Resource Management Plan (RMP) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) describe and analyze alternatives for the planning and management of public lands and resources administered by the BLM, Bakersfield Field Office. The Planning Area is located in central California, and comprises approximately 17 million acres of land. Within the Decision Area, the BLM administers approximately 400,000 acres of surface estate and 1.2 million acres of federal mineral estate.

Through this RMP revision, the BLM is revising the existing plans (1997 Caliente and 1984 Hollister RMPs) to address the availability of new data and policies, emerging issues, and changing circumstances that have occurred during the 14 plus years since the Record of Decisions (RODs) for the existing plans were signed. As part of the RMP revision process, the BLM conducted scoping to solicit input from the public and interested agencies on the nature and extent of issues and impacts to be addressed in the Draft RMP and Draft EIS. Planning issues identified for this RMP revision focus on access to public, travel, recreation and visitor services, wildlife and special status species, livestock grazing, and energy and minerals management.

To assist the agency decision maker and the public in focusing on appropriate solutions to planning issues, the Draft EIS considers five alternative RMPs.

Alternative A is a continuation of current management (No Action Alternative). Under this alternative, the BLM would continue to manage the use of public lands and resources under the existing RMPs, as amended.

Alternative B is the BLM's current Preferred Alternative, which provides for a balance between resource protection and development. This is not a final agency decision, but instead an indication of the agency's preliminary preference that considers the recommendations of cooperating agencies and BLM specialists and reflects the best combination of decisions to achieve BLM goals and policies, meet the purpose and need, and address the key planning issues. **Alternative C** emphasizes protection of physical, biological, and heritage resources, while providing for the smallest level of development, comparatively. **Alternative D** mimics the emphasis on protection in alternative C, however, presents a no grazing option to be analyzed. **Alternative E** emphasizes resource development, while limiting protective management of physical, biological, and heritage resources.

When completed, the ROD for the RMP will provide comprehensive long-range decisions for (1) managing resources in the Bakersfield Field Office and (2) identifying allowable uses on BLM-administered surface and mineral estate. Comments are accepted for 90 days following the date on which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes the Notice of Availability for this Draft RMP and Draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. Comments may be submitted electronically using the RMP revision website at: www.ca.blm.gov/bakersfield or via e-mail to caclrmp@blm.gov. Comments may also be submitted by mail to:

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